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RECORD OF THE FIRST PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Austria Center Vienna
on Monday, 29 September 1997, at 10.20 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. PADOLINA (Philippines)
President: Mr. NIEWODNICZAŃSKI (Poland)

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[*] GC(41)/1 and Add.1-2.

The composition of delegations attending the session is given in document GC(41)/INF/17/Rev.2.

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Abbreviations used in this record

AFRA	African Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology
ARCAL	Regional Co-operative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America
Basic Safety Standards	International Basic Safety Standards for Protection against Ionizing Radiation and for the Safety of Radiation Sources
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
G-7	Group of Seven [leading industrial countries]
G-7+1	Group of Seven and Russia [= G-8]
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Joint Convention	Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management
MESA	Middle East and South Asia
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NPT Review and Extension Conference	Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBMK	High-power channel-type reactor (Soviet Union)
RCA	Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (for Asia and the Pacific)
TACC	Technical Assistance and Co-operation Committee
TCDC	Technical co-operation among developing countries
TCF	Technical Co-operation Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WWER	Water-cooled and -moderated reactor

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the forty-first regular session of the General Conference.

2. In accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Conference, he invited the delegates to observe one minute of silence dedicated to prayer or meditation.

All present rose and stood in silence for one minute.

3. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, having expressed his gratitude for the support and co-operation extended to him during the fortieth session of the General Conference, said that the current session of the General Conference marked two important milestones: the fortieth year of the entry into force of the Agency's Statute and the silver anniversary of the RCA, which had become a mature technical co-operation network providing great benefit to its 17 Member States.

4. Since the fortieth session of the General Conference, there had been many developments where the Agency had been able to demonstrate its ability to further its role both in promoting global peace and prosperity through the peaceful applications of nuclear energy and in implementing nuclear safeguards to ensure a world free from the threat of nuclear destruction.

5. As the international agency entrusted with the implementation of the safeguards required under the NPT, the Agency was constantly faced with the challenges of strengthening its safeguards system and improving the efficiency of the verification system. It had discharged its responsibilities effectively in both areas and the Director General and the Secretariat were to be commended for their efforts.

6. With the approval of the Model Additional Protocol, the Agency now faced the challenge of making it an operational reality. It was to be hoped that all Governments would conclude their respective protocols with the Agency forthwith to ensure a higher degree of confidence that nuclear materials and sensitive equipment would not be diverted to non-peaceful applications.

7. The Secretariat was to be congratulated for undertaking measures which had enabled the Agency to meet the growing number of programme challenges with no real growth in its budget. The streamlined, automated process for Agency travel, the so-called ATLAS system, had, in particular, started to reap dividends.

8. Considerable progress had been made in the area of technical co-operation. In view of the increasing scarcity of resources, projects involving the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology would have to compete against other projects using other technologies. Efforts to improve the effectiveness of the technical co-operation programme continued to gain momentum and the technical co-operation strategy paper due to be presented to the TACC later in the year was expected to contribute substantially in that connection.

9. The Agency had continued to promote global safety initiatives in a number of ways and had achieved progress in developing a global safety culture. The opening for signature of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage was welcome, as was the opening for signature of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which was intended to cover all types of radioactive wastes. It was important that all those achievements, which would contribute slowly but surely towards the development of an international safety culture, should be communicated to the public in a manner which would ensure that the ensuing benefits were properly recognized.

10. A number of unresolved issues from the fortieth session of the General Conference would require further consideration at the present session, including the proposed amendment of Article VI of the Statute. He trusted that, with the active participation and co-operation of all delegations, it would be possible to solve those issues.

11. In conclusion, he paid tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, for his sterling guidance and leadership of the Agency and wished him well in the future. He also thanked all members of the Agency, in particular the members of the Board of Governors, for the work which they had accomplished since the fortieth session of the General Conference,

including the selection of Mr. ElBaradei as the new Director General. Furthermore, he thanked all participants for their support and co-operation over the past year, which would undoubtedly be extended to the new President, and wished everyone a successful conference.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

Election of the President of the Conference

12. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited nominations for the office of President of the Conference.

13. Mr. ŠTULLER (Czech Republic), speaking on behalf of the Eastern European Group, proposed Mr. Jerzy Niewodniczański (Poland), whose extensive experience in the fields of science and technology and personal attributes made him eminently suitable for the office of President.

14. Mr. Niewodniczański (Poland) was elected President by acclamation.

15. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT, speaking on his own behalf and on behalf of all delegates, congratulated Mr. Niewodniczański on his election and wished him every success in his task.

Mr. Niewodniczański (Poland) took the Chair.

16. The PRESIDENT said he appreciated the honour bestowed upon himself and his country by his election as President of the forty-first regular session of the General Conference and thanked the members of the Eastern European Group that had unanimously agreed to his nomination. He also conveyed the greetings and best wishes of Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, for a successful conference. He thanked his predecessor Mr. Padolina for his able and skilful guidance of the fortieth regular session in 1996.

17. The forty-first session of the General Conference was taking place at an auspicious time in the Agency's history. Firstly, the session was an anniversary one, following the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Agency's Statute on 29 July 1957. As a result of the foresight and commendable efforts of the founding fathers, nuclear technologies

had made important contributions to the development of the world and had never been used to resolve any conflict since the Agency's establishment. The hundredth anniversary of the discovery of polonium and radium by Marie and Pierre Curie had also taken place during the year and had been celebrated in Poland by a series of commemorative events. The discoveries by the Curies had opened the door to new techniques that had had a great impact on the world and, since its establishment, the Agency had been involved in the application of those techniques.

18. The forty-first session would be called upon to approve the appointment of a new Director General for the Agency. The Government and people of Poland warmly commended Mr. Hans Blix for his very distinguished service over the past 16 years as Director General and wished him continued success in all his future endeavours.

19. The Board of Governors and all Member States were also to be commended for their achievements in the past year in resolving a number of long-standing issues, in particular the successful conclusion of the Diplomatic Conferences on the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and on the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

20. The Board had also successfully concluded its deliberations on measures to strengthen the safeguards system, which had culminated in the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol in May 1997. Poland intended to be one of the first countries to sign an additional protocol.

21. The Agency had a special and important role to play in the global quest for peaceful applications of nuclear energy and in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons. It was a role that it had played very well over the past forty years with the co-operation of all Member States. He therefore appealed to all States to continue to extend their co-operation to the Agency as it celebrated its fortieth anniversary with renewed hope for the future. He further appealed for the co-operation of all participants to enable him to perform his functions successfully as President of the forty-first regular session of the General Conference.

22. Before proceeding to the election of other officers and the appointment of the General Committee, he invited Mr. Viktor Klima, Federal Chancellor of Austria, to address the Conference.

Further business under item 1 was suspended.

ADDRESS BY THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR OF AUSTRIA

23. Mr. KLIMA (Federal Chancellor of Austria), having congratulated the President on his election as President of the forty-first regular session of the General Conference, said that it was a great honour for him to address the Agency's Member States as they celebrated its fortieth anniversary. Austria took considerable pride in having been host to the Agency from its very beginning and had done its best over the past 40 years to give it the necessary support by building permanent headquarters for the Agency and by providing the laboratories at Seibersdorf, where, from the early sixties, important scientific and educational work had been carried out, in particular for the benefit of the developing countries.

24. The General Conference was meeting at a time of great hope: the ideological confrontations of the Cold War no longer posed an obstacle to global solutions and more States than ever were showing readiness to solve international and global problems within the framework of the United Nations system. On the other hand, the international community still faced a number of major challenges. The dramatic events of 1991 had called for reforms in the nuclear non-proliferation agenda for the United Nations and in particular for the Agency. With the recent adoption by the Board of Governors of the Model Additional Protocol for strengthened and more efficient international safeguards to detect clandestine nuclear activities, thus increasing confidence that those States were fulfilling their obligations, the Agency had proved its ability to master new challenges.

25. In addition, the United Nations General Assembly, by endorsing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, had laid the legal basis for a ban on all nuclear tests. The history of the CTBT, which had been a priority on the nuclear arms control and disarmament agenda since the 1950s, was closely linked to the NPT, adding to the system of nuclear verification.

The acceptance by the new organization, the CTBTO, of Austria's invitation to establish its headquarters in Vienna, had been particularly welcome.

26. The Agency, in close co-operation with the CTBTO, would be able to make an important contribution both to the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation and to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Austrian Government hoped that Vienna would become the centre for global nuclear arms control and disarmament.

27. The devastating Chernobyl accident in 1986 had affected millions of people and caused widespread environmental damage. The effects of that accident on Austria and many other European countries had demonstrated that the consequences of nuclear accidents were not confined to the region or country of origin. With the adoption of the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident in September 1986, the international community, under the auspices of the Agency, had reacted quickly but only partially. It had taken more than a decade before the Convention on Nuclear Safety had entered into force, again under the auspices of the Agency, and it was only recently that a convention had been adopted in the area of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste management, and further instruments adopted in the field of nuclear liability.

28. All those achievements marked milestones on the thorny road to achieving a situation where adequate international legal instruments would cover all aspects of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Those encouraging steps would not have been possible without the dedicated work of the Agency with its highly professional staff and the determination of its Member States. They confirmed, yet again, the Agency's ability to cope with new challenges and to adapt to a changing environment. Nevertheless, much remained to be done.

29. The future role of nuclear power generation would continue to be questioned in principle. While respecting national sovereignty and current international law, he did not consider nuclear power to be compatible with the concept of sustainable development. Consequently, reliance on nuclear power could not be a viable option for combating the greenhouse effect. That position was shared by all the political parties represented in the Austrian Parliament. Sustainable development, if fully applied to the energy sector, would

require substantial increases in energy efficiency and energy saving as well as a switch to renewable sources of energy with the ultimate goal of meeting the demand for energy services in the industrial world and in developing countries alike.

30. Forty years of the Agency was a forty-year success story. In that connection, he thanked Mr. Blix for his efforts and the dedication with which he had served the Agency and its Member States during the past 16 years. He also expressed his best wishes to the incoming Director General for his future work and assured him of Austria's full support in his efforts to guide the organization to meet the growing challenges of the future. The Agency would continue to play a central role in the nuclear field and Austria, for its part, stood ready to support the Agency in the decades to come as it had done over the past 40 years.

31. Finally, he wished the participants of the forty-first session of the General Conference a successful conclusion of the work which lay ahead.

32. The PRESIDENT, having thanked Mr. Klima for doing the Agency the honour of participating in the General Conference and for his thought-provoking address, proposed that the meeting be suspended briefly to enable the Chancellor to leave the Conference Hall.

The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 10.55 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE (resumed)

33. The PRESIDENT recalled said that under Rules 34 and 40 of its Rules of Procedure the Conference had to elect eight Vice-Presidents, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole and five additional members of the General Committee, resulting in a Committee of 15 with himself as Chairman. As a consensus had emerged from the consultations which had taken place, he proposed that under Rule 34 the delegates of Canada, Germany, Guatemala, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Russian Federation and Zimbabwe be elected as Vice-Presidents, and that Mr. Richard Stratford of the United States of America be elected as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and that, under Rule 40, the delegates of Bangladesh, Finland, Greece, South Africa and Venezuela be elected as additional members of the General Committee.

34. The President's proposals were accepted.

35. The PRESIDENT further proposed that, prior to the General Committee's meeting and submitting its recommendations on the agenda, the General Conference waive Rule 42 and proceed with its consideration of items 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 in order not to lose time.

36. The President's proposal was accepted.

APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE AGENCY
(GC(41)/2 and 3)

37. The CHAIRMAN informed delegates that the General Conference had before it applications for membership by Malta and Burkina Faso contained in documents GC(41)/2 and 3 respectively. Those applications had been endorsed by the Board of Governors, which had also submitted draft resolutions on those applications for adoption by the General Conference.

38. He assumed that the Conference wished to adopt the draft resolutions by acclamation.

39. It was so decided.

40. Mr. BORG (Malta)[1] expressed his Government's gratitude to the Board of Governors for endorsing, and to the General Conference for approving, Malta's application for membership of the Agency. That application was yet another demonstration of his Government's commitment to policies that opposed and prohibited the production, proliferation, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons. Malta had been a party to the NPT since 1970 and in November of that year had signed an agreement with the Agency for the application of safeguards. It believed that membership of the Agency would enhance Malta's role in, and contribution to, the strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament.

41. Recalling that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Environment, in submitting Malta's application for membership, had pledged the

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[1] Speaking under Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure.

Government's commitment to the concomitant obligations of membership and its intention to abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, he reiterated that commitment and assured the General Conference that his delegation was prepared to work tirelessly to ensure that the objectives for which the Agency had been established were realized in the most comprehensive manner possible.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

42. Mr. ARLACCHI (Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations) read out the following message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations:

> "I am pleased to send greetings to the forty-first regular session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This session is important for a number of reasons.
>
> "First, we are marking the IAEA's fortieth anniversary. Over the years, its role has become valuable in international efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensuring the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology for sustainable development. I salute the IAEA for its many achievements.
>
> "This session will also mark a change of guard at the helm of the IAEA. I wish to pay tribute to Dr. Hans Blix for his 16 years of outstanding leadership and service in the cause of peace and development. He leaves behind a great legacy. I wish him much happiness, health and success in his new undertakings, and I pledge my full co-operation and support to the new Director General.
>
> "This session will address a long and complex agenda. You will continue coping with the Chernobyl disaster and promoting nuclear safety - efforts which received a boost last year with the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety. You will be trying to devise effective measures against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials by criminal elements who prey on the openness of borders and the transnational movements of goods, finance, information and people that characterize our age.
>
> "I am pleased that so many countries have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and initiated steps towards its ratification. This is a landmark agreement. The Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO has now been established at the Vienna International Centre, and is making steady progress towards becoming fully operational.
>
> "IAEA safeguards under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are an integral part of the international regime for non-proliferation and play an indispensable role in ensuring implementation of the Treaty. I welcome therefore the adoption in May this year of the Model Protocol additional to existing safeguards

agreements between States and the IAEA, which is designed to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the IAEA's safeguards system.

"I am also pleased to note the successful conclusion of two important diplomatic conferences this month in Vienna. The first led to the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The second adopted two instruments in the field of nuclear liability. All three are being opened for signature at this General Conference. They greatly enhance our efforts to establish an international legal regime in the nuclear field.

"I would also like to express appreciation for the IAEA's efforts in implementing resolutions of the Security Council relating to Iraq and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This work is just one manifestation of the long tradition of close ties between our two organizations.

"That peace and development are two sides of the same coin is broadly recognized today. The technical co-operation activities of the IAEA to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy are a direct contribution to development, helping countries in the critical areas of water, health, nutrition, medicine and food production. Such activities also help with implementation of Agenda 21.

"As we continue down the 'road from Rio', I look forward to the contributions the IAEA is sure to make to discussions on the role of energy in fulfilling the hopes generated by the 'Earth Summit' and by the follow-up special session of the General Assembly held this past June to assess progress made since the Rio Conference.

"The fifty-second session of the General Assembly has now begun. With reform and renewal at the top of the agenda, this promises to be one of the most momentous periods of debate and action in United Nations history. We are seeking nothing less than to reshape and retool the Organization for the new global era.

"The tasks ahead are numerous, complicated and urgent. I look forward to working with the IAEA in our joint efforts towards international peace, security and development. Please accept my best wishes for a productive and successful session."

43. Speaking as Director General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, and on his own behalf, he wished the participants of the General Conference every success in their deliberations. In addressing vital aspects of peace and security, it was important to bear in mind the broad concept of human security, which encompassed aspects ranging from nuclear safety to the protection of the individual from threats in his immediate environment. Hand in hand with the positive effects of globalization that often rendered national borders

meaningless, the world community increasingly faced the threats of transnational organized crime, drug abuse and terrorism. Those threats represented some of the priority issues that the United Nations addressed in Vienna.

44. With the important work of the IAEA, UNIDO, the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO and the United Nations, the Vienna International Centre had indeed become a centre dealing with various aspects of human security in the broad sense. He looked forward to furthering that broad concept of human security and to working closely with the Agency and other organizations to realize that goal.

45. Finally, he wished to congratulate the Director General designate, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, with whom he looked forward to working closely, and to wish Mr. Hans Blix a productive time in the next phase of his work.

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

46. The DIRECTOR GENERAL, having drawn attention to two books that were being published to mark the Agency's fortieth anniversary, said that the anniversary year had been an extremely productive one. A number of spectacular results had been registered in the field of technical co-operation: for instance, the cattle disease rinderpest had been eradicated from most countries in Africa and the tsetse fly had been eliminated from the island of Zanzibar. The Convention on Nuclear Safety, concluded in 1995, had entered into force, and preparation for the first meeting of the parties for safety peer reviews was scheduled for 1998. New legal instruments on liability for nuclear damage, including the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, had recently been adopted in Vienna after many years of work. In the fields of safety of spent fuel management and safety of radioactive waste management, two years of negotiations had culminated in the very recent adoption of the Joint Convention. In the field of verification, the Model Additional Protocol had been adopted by the Board of Governors in June 1997, completing a series of measures to strengthen the safeguards system which had begun after the Gulf War.

47. Turning to the Agency's different areas of work, he said its activities involving co-operation in research and the transfer of nuclear technology had steadily expanded, but the

emphasis had changed with changing needs in Member States. The Agency had long placed emphasis on research in nuclear science and had helped to develop institutions and staff that could carry out scientific research and advance the use of nuclear techniques in agriculture, medicine and industry. In most, but not all, countries, that initial formative stage had been completed. Support for basic science continued, but the Agency's technical co-operation was increasingly aimed at achieving direct practical benefits such as higher yield crops, assurance of food quality, healthier animals and better use of water. That change in the emphasis and direction of the Agency's technical co-operation had been accompanied by efforts to improve planning methods and implementation.

48. Successful results had been achieved with assistance from the Agency's technical co-operation programme in a variety of areas: isotope techniques were often very useful in the exploration and rational exploitation of water resources and the Agency had assisted many countries over the years in that field, for example, in the area of Caracas, groundwater reserves had been mapped using isotope techniques and some 50 wells had been drilled to supplement the city's water supply, reducing the deficit by about 30%; in the field of nuclear medicine, a 30 MW(e) cyclotron had been installed and commissioned at the Karadj Nuclear Research Centre for Agriculture and Medicine in Iran with expert assistance and training provided under an Agency project and was now producing radionuclides for 65 nuclear medicine centres in Iran; salt-tolerant plants and nuclear techniques were being used to map the interactions between the groundwater, soil and plants in cases where saline soils and brackish groundwater impeded agricultural production causing major problems in many countries and an interregional Model Project launched in 1997 was designed to demonstrate the feasibility of that approach by drawing on Pakistan's successful experience; another Agency Model Project had been launched to help strengthen radiation safety in no less than 53 countries and the ambition was that by the year 2000 those countries would all comply with the Agency's Basic Safety Standards.

49. Turning to regional co-operation arrangements, he noted that the RCA, which was celebrating 25 years of successful activities in 1997, and similar arrangements in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa (ARCAL and AFRA) continued to address the

specific needs of their respective regions and demonstrated that regional technical co-operation between developing countries had a special capacity to mobilize expertise and facilitate technology transfer. Support for those schemes remained an important way for the Agency to reach out to and co-operate with the countries in the regions.

50. Looking to the future, Agency support would no longer be required for some nuclear activities and services that had become self-supporting or that had become commercial. However, many other areas remained. There was, for example, no commercial interest in developing appropriate norms and establishing institutions to ensure radiation protection, to monitor safety or to apply safeguards.

51. Assisting developing countries to share in the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had been a fundamental part of the vision of the Atoms for Peace initiative on which the Agency had been established. The Agency's ability to provide that assistance depended on adequate funding. At a time when Member States turned increasingly to the Agency for help in transferring nuclear techniques - in areas such as more effective food production or environmental monitoring - not all donors and recipients were contributing as envisaged. As a result, there was the prospect of a US $5 million shortfall in resources for the technical co-operation programme in 1997. The Board had urged the Secretariat to take "due account" of the record of contributions - whether from recipient or donor States - in the allocation of resources and in procurement, and the Secretariat was doing so. Donor countries which pledged and fully paid their proposed share of the target understandably felt that their contributions should be used for the procurement of services and equipment primarily in States that did likewise or in developing countries.

52. Turning to the nuclear power and fuel cycle, he noted that vigorous expansion of nuclear power was currently visible only in some countries in East Asia. In most other parts of the world, there was stagnation or a slowdown, with most of the additional electricity-generation capacity based on fossil fuels - coal and gas. Nevertheless, many Governments remained very interested in international co-operation that could help to make full use of existing nuclear capacity and to develop further and make more diversified use of nuclear power. For instance, many countries suffering, or expecting to suffer, from a shortage of fresh

water were interested in the potential use of nuclear power for desalination of water. As obstacles arose to the building of new reactors, questions relating to the ageing of existing reactors attracted more interest; as concerns were encountered about the longevity of high-level nuclear waste, Governments took an interest in the prospects for the transmutation of actinides. Those interests affected the Agency's programme, as did the continuous interest of Governments in the safety of nuclear power and waste disposal.

53. Yet another factor of great relevance for nuclear power had emerged in the 1990s - the risk of climate change, or global warming, due to the accelerated emissions of so-called greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels, the most important being carbon dioxide.

54. It used to be said that the best energy was the cheapest energy and the Agency had a long tradition of assessing the cost of nuclear-generated energy and comparing it with the cost of energy from other sources. Cost certainly remained very relevant and it was clear that, for a variety of reasons, the nuclear option had lost the competitive cost advantage it had previously enjoyed in many places. However, several other factors were becoming of great relevance in States' choice of energy sources and assessed in their calculation of the cost of the energy used. The cost of waste disposal, for example, had long been included in the cost calculated for nuclear-generated electricity. More recently, the environmental cost to society of the dispersion, or the expense of neutralization by technical means, of waste from burnt fossil fuels had attracted general attention. Requiring utilities which burned coal or oil to prevent damaging emissions of SO_2 and NO_x into the atmosphere had a direct, substantial impact on the price of the electricity generated by those sources. Any charge on CO_2 emissions would have a similar impact. The Agency must evidently follow that discussion, which could lead to cost increases and/or to restrictions in the use of fossil fuels and cause a greater demand for nuclear power, which gave rise to no CO_2 emissions. There had already been repeated calls for limitations on CO_2 emissions, with little effect, however.

55. Against that background, the stage would seem to be set for a discussion of energy policies, including nuclear power policies. The United States had recently announced an initiative for an internal discussion to increase understanding of the problem of climate change; Russia had invited the G-7 energy ministers to a meeting preceding the 1998 G-7+1

summit; and the aim of the Kyoto Conference on the Climate Change Convention later in 1997 was to reach agreement on targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It was still far from clear, however, what approach different Governments would take in the face of the current dilemma between the demands for more energy and for limitation of CO_2 emissions.

56. If current trends continued, it was inevitable that there would be a further increase in global CO_2 emissions, but if nuclear power were adopted more widely, it could have a significant restraining impact on CO_2 emissions at costs not very different from those of fossil-fuelled power. Only hydroelectric power could compete with nuclear power as a non-CO_2 producing source of baseload power. Most Agency Member States favoured the expanded or at least continued use of nuclear power, while some were opposed. However, even in the absence of a consensus about the use of nuclear power, several courses were generally supported.

57. One course of action that had been accepted by all members was the preparation of data and analyses and assessments of the various energy options, not only in terms of direct cost, but also in terms of their impact on health, environment, safety and security. In collaboration with a number of other international organizations and national institutions, the Agency had developed methodologies and databases for such comparative assessment. While Governments also had to consider political and psychological aspects before discussing strategies and taking decisions, the studies contributed some hard facts as a technical basis for policy decisions.

58. A second area where there seemed to be continuing general support for the Agency to act was the exchange of information and experience in the development of modern reactor designs, including breeders, fuel cycle options and waste management technologies. Furthermore, with the welcome prospect of nuclear material, including plutonium, being turned over from military programmes to the civilian sector, adding to the quantities arising from the reprocessing of spent civilian nuclear fuel, there was also a need for an intensified international discussion about the use of plutonium stocks and options for the fuel cycle. The Agency was serving as a central forum for that important discussion.

59. A third course of action, supported by consensus and followed by the Agency from the time of its inception, was to promote nuclear safety. One important area of such action had been the adoption of legally binding rules. Some 40 States were now parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which had entered into force in 1996. In 1997, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management had been adopted. They were further results of the readiness which States felt after the Chernobyl accident to seek internationally binding rules and procedures to demonstrate a commitment to, and to promote, universal safety standards. States should be encouraged to adhere to those Conventions and to participate fully in the peer reviews and other procedures for their implementation.

60. The development of non-binding joint norms and the provision of services had likewise been dramatic. Without impinging on national sovereignty and responsibility for nuclear safety, the Agency had offered extensive services in the safety field, thereby supplementing national efforts. While the Agency welcomed the provision of safety services, to the extent they were able, by the World Association of Nuclear Operators and other organizations, it was important to ensure that there was no duplication of effort.

61. A special category of safety questions which had been given much attention by the Agency in the past decade related to the need for safety improvements in the power reactors in Eastern Europe. Much had been achieved, but a great deal remained to be done to implement the required improvements. At the same time, there were emerging demands for safety support and advice in areas such as safety infrastructures and training in new or expanding nuclear power programmes, especially in Asia. Fortunately, it appeared that the Agency would be able to meet those demands, as Japan, in particular, had generously offered extrabudgetary support for work in that area.

62. A question which had received much attention in recent years in connection with radiation protection was to what extent radiological hazards remained from past nuclear-weapons tests. In several cases the Agency had been asked to answer that question, and studies had been carried out at former nuclear-weapon test sites in Kazakhstan, the Marshall

Islands and French Polynesia, the results of which had proved to be far less worrisome than some had feared.

63. Turning to the subject of Iraq, he recalled that, in its resolution 687 adopted in 1991, the Security Council had decided that Iraq should make a declaration describing its nuclear-weapons-related assets, and that the Agency should urgently inspect and destroy, remove or render harmless what was of relevance for a weapons capacity and thereafter implement monitoring and verification measures to detect any revival of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. Owing to Iraq's policy of concealment and obstruction, mixed with spells of co-operation, it had not been possible to keep to the schedule envisaged by the Security Council. The Agency had been obliged to rely on the results of its own inspections, information from suppliers and Governments, information obtained from Iraq and its own expertise and knowledge to form a technically coherent picture of Iraq's vast programme. The completeness of that picture had been and remained decisive for the fulfilment of the mandate to identify, destroy, remove or render harmless relevant material, installations and equipment. Through more than six years of investigations, the blank spots in the picture had become fewer, although there was still more to learn and it was not impossible that some equipment might still be undetected. As fewer questions arose, however, the emphasis was shifting to ongoing monitoring and verification, which should allow the Agency to sound the alarm if a renewal of the nuclear programme were to be undertaken.

64. The discovery in 1991 that Iraq had been able to mount a secret programme of uranium enrichment and weaponization undetected had confirmed that the Agency's safeguards system had to be strengthened. Many measures that had fallen within the Agency's existing authority had been adopted without much delay, and the Model Additional Protocol, when accepted by States, would add new teeth to the system and introduce new cost-effective techniques. He welcomed that instrument and expressed appreciation to the six countries - Armenia, Australia, Georgia, the Philippines, Poland and Uruguay - that were taking the lead in signing individual additional protocols. He trusted that other States would follow soon. For the Secretariat, it would be a great challenge to ensure early, smooth and efficient implementation. The case of Iraq had convinced everyone of the need to strengthen

safeguards and the Agency's experiences in Iraq, although based on inspection rights that went vastly beyond what would be accepted by States under normal circumstances, had suggested important new approaches and techniques, some of which were envisaged in the Model Additional Protocol. The Agency's experience in Iraq had thus broadened its perspective in the field of verification. It was now better able to tailor verification schemes to fit needs that might arise in nuclear-weapon-free zones, in a "cut-off" agreement and other contexts.

65. In the DPRK, the Agency was asserting its right and duty to perform inspections under an NPT-type safeguards agreement which remained in force. But at the same time, it was verifying a freeze of the DPRK nuclear programme at the request of the Security Council and with periodic reporting to the Council. Regrettably, co-operation received from the DPRK had not improved in the past year and the correctness and completeness of the initial inventory of plutonium declared by the DPRK could therefore not be verified.

66. During the General Conference in 1996, an arrangement had been made between the then Secretary of Energy of the United States, the Minister of the Russian Federation for Atomic Energy and himself to examine the modalities of Agency verification in the United States and Russia that nuclear material transferred from the defence sector to the peaceful sector, notably fissile material from dismantled nuclear weapons, remained peacefully stored or was rendered unusable for weapons purposes. Exploratory discussions had been pursued on that subject in the past year: he himself had recently visited the Mayak facility under construction in the Urals where large quantities of fissile material from dismantled Russian nuclear weapons were to be stored. The current session of the General Conference was providing an opportunity for a further round of discussions on that issue.

67. Regrettably, no progress had been made during the past year on the proposal for a "cut-off" agreement to stop all production of fissile material for weapons purposes It was to be hoped that talks would soon be reactivated. While verification of the peaceful storage or use of fissile material from dismantled weapons would give confidence that no such material went back into new weapons, verification of a "cut-off" would give the world confidence that no fresh fissile material was produced for new bombs. The two measures would complement

each other and point toward the long-term goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Many questions needed to be answered, however - not least about the modalities of verification and how it would be financed. It might be tempting to suggest that the States responsible for the production of fissile material used for weapons should pay for the verification themselves. However, such a regime would make the verification financially dependent upon the party where verification was to take place. Perhaps some thought should be devoted to having a special nuclear disarmament verification fund based on long-term voluntary contributions.

68. As was apparent from seizures made in recent years of small quantities of nuclear materials and of radioactive sources, criminal attempts were being made to exploit a black market in those items. Such illicit trafficking raised both health and proliferation risks. In response to the interest of Member States, the Agency had developed a programme which sought to supplement the action taken by Governments and to co-ordinate a variety of measures directed at the problem. In some States, the Agency was offering advice on appropriate legislation and standards of physical protection. In others, training was provided. In addition, the Agency had developed a database containing official information about reported cases. It also intended to explore whether some of the relevant international instruments - notably the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material - should be updated.

69. The Agency's accomplishments did not mean that all the challenges facing it had disappeared. They continued to exist not only in the area of its specific mission, the peaceful use of nuclear energy, but also, importantly, in the area of management. If the Agency had faced less criticism than most other international organizations, it was probably because its house had been kept in reasonably good order and it had become aware relatively early of the need for modernization and streamlining. However, it remained financially vulnerable: any failure to pay or late payment by large contributors raised serious problems for the smooth functioning of the Agency. All contributions were appreciated. Some had been made only the previous week and the Agency hoped that larger contributions would be made the following month so that it would remain solvent until the end of the year. Needless to say,

such uncertainty was not a healthy situation. He therefore made his perennial appeal to all Member States, large and small, to pay their dues and to pay on time.

70. Information technology had radically changed the ways in which the Secretariat worked and would increasingly change the way it interacted with Member States and counterpart organizations. For example, most of the documentation for the current session was available electronically, via the Internet, to Member States and to the world. Board documents were also becoming available electronically. The benefits for both Member States and the Agency were speed and ease of access as well as reduced printing and distribution costs.

71. In personnel matters the Secretariat had sought, in line with the directives of the General Conference, to increase the number of staff from developing countries and to improve the representation of women on the Professional staff. The measures taken were described in documents GC(41)/18 and 19. Since the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Agency in 1982, the developing country share of Professional staff subject to geographical distribution had almost doubled and was now close to 33%. For senior officers - Directors and Deputy Directors General - it was currently even higher at 36.4%. The number of women on the Professional staff had not increased as much as it should have done, although some progress had been recorded. From 1982 to 1997, the share had increased from 11.7% to 18.6%. As to the figures for women holding higher-level Professional posts, i.e. P-5 and above, whereas in 1982, the highest-graded women in the Secretariat had been two staff members at P-5, there were currently 11 women at the P-5 level and 6 at the D-1 grade.

72. Turning from the subject of staff recruitment to the staff on board, he reaffirmed his conviction that the Agency's good reputation was due not only to the readiness of Member States and their representatives to work constructively to achieve results, but also to the competence, professional skill and dedication of the Secretariat staff. In addition, it should be recognized that Vienna provided a very positive environment for the work and lives of staff. He expressed appreciation and gratitude on their behalf to the Austrian Government and the City of Vienna for the prevailing good conditions.

73. The Agency had a very specific profile within the United Nations family in its dedication to science and technical excellence - characteristics which should be preserved. Its statutory mandate was also very specific - to promote the peaceful applications and to help prevent the military uses of nuclear energy. Its mission was therefore clear. The Agency was not, however, the only international organization engaged in the field of energy, nor the only one engaged in nuclear arms control. Its position within the United Nations family of organizations called for co-operation to achieve joint goals and distribution of labour to avoid duplication.

74. The Agency sought faithfully to observe and implement United Nations system-wide policies concerning, for example, the status of women, least developed countries and protection of the environment. It had also successfully co-operated with other United Nations organizations in areas where their mandates were contiguous or overlapped.

75. International co-operation in the general field of energy was a more complex matter. The Agency's statutory mandate was limited to nuclear energy, which was deemed to call for global intergovernmental co-operation. The members of the United Nations community had not - at least so far - wished to establish any organization for energy generally, not even after the oil crises in the 1970s. Moreover, the members of the Agency had never had any ambition to extend the scope of the Agency's work to promoting, for instance, renewable energy sources. However, at a time when the accelerated use of energy, more particularly fossil sources of energy, could have the most dramatic consequences for the world, there was no specialized global intergovernmental forum for the discussion of accelerated energy use and the current mix of sources. He was not advocating that one should be created at the present stage. Perhaps more modestly, as was the case with other questions which were of great relevance under Agenda 21, an organization in the United Nations system could be made the focal point and task manager within the system for the compilation and analysis of relevant data. The International Energy Agency was clearly a highly competent institution of that kind, but the OECD, to which it belonged, was not - or at least not yet - a global organization.

76. He believed that the Agency's existing activity in the general field of energy was adequate. It consisted essentially in collecting data concerning nuclear power and other sources of energy and comparing them from a variety of viewpoints, including cost, risk, health and environment, and providing those data to Member States and other United Nations organizations as a factual basis for policy consideration. He was personally convinced that in due course such data would persuade Governments that a revival of the nuclear power option was both needed and justified. The problems facing that option today were not so much technical and economic as psychological. If he were to recommend any expanded Agency activity, it would be in the area of promoting better understanding everywhere of nuclear energy, radiation and risk. Most people had not yet come to grips with the force of the atom - as they had come to grips with the force of gravity - and with its benefits and risks. Perhaps more information and education in that area on a long-term basis would help to solve the psychological problems. The Agency might be a forum where the need for information was discussed and an instrument through which basic material could be provided for use by Governments.

77. In the area of arms control, the Agency was no longer the only global intergovernmental organization. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was in operation at The Hague and the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the CTBT was in place in Vienna. Like the Agency, those organizations had important verification functions. The Agency looked forward to co-operation and enriching discussions about common objectives and varying methods of work. While the United Nations Security Council was responsible for any enforcement actions regarding weapons of mass destruction, organizations like the Agency would be the watchdogs of the system. He was optimistic about the long-term prospects for nuclear arms control, including the currently delayed "cut-off" agreement.

78. In conclusion, he quoted from a recent speech in which the President of Brazil had announced his Government's intention to supplement Brazil's adherence to the Tlatelolco Treaty by adherence to the NPT. The President had argued that the atomic bomb was losing its juridical legitimacy and political importance. Whereas previously nuclear weapons had

been central to the military planning of the Superpowers, the atomic bomb was currently viewed as a source of risk, costs and uncertainty. Even in the nuclear Powers, public opinion was recognizing that the bomb only increased insecurity. At the same time, other countries that were stronger in economic production and trade and political stability had gained great influence in international relations. The essential power factors in today's world were competitiveness and social cohesion. The Director General subscribed to those thoughts. He merely wished to add that the slow setting of the sun on the nuclear weapons era would need to be closely watched and that there would be no shortage of work in that connection for the Agency.

79. The PRESIDENT, commending the Director General on his statement, said that his interesting ideas on the challenges that lay ahead for the Agency would certainly be carefully considered by Member States.

APPROVAL OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
(GC(41)/5 and 25)

80. The PRESIDENT declared that, pursuant to Article VII.A of the Statute, the Board had decided to appoint Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei to serve as Director General of the Agency for a term of four years from 1 December 1997 to 30 November 2001 and had requested the General Conference to approve that appointment by adopting the draft resolution contained in document GC(41)/5. He took it that the General Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution contained in document GC(41)/5.

81. It was so decided and the Conference confirmed the appointment of Mr. ElBaradei to the post of Director General by acclamation.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. ElBaradei entered the meeting.

82. The PRESIDENT informed Mr. ElBaradei that the Conference had approved his appointment to the post of Director General. He was pleased to be the first to congratulate him on behalf of the General Conference and to wish him a long and fruitful tenure. He invited him to take the oath of office.

83. Mr. ELBARADEI took the following oath:

> "I solemnly swear to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to discharge these functions and to regulate my conduct with the interest of the Agency only in view, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other authority external to the Agency."

84. Mr. ELBARADEI said he was grateful for, and humbled by, the confidence placed in him by the General Conference and would do his best to fulfil the duties of his office objectively, impartially and efficiently in accordance with the Statute and the directives of the policy-making organs.

85. Intergovernmental organizations were instruments for co-operation among States for the common good. They were at their best when consensus prevailed and they could be paralysed by dissension. To enjoy the confidence and support of their members, they had to be responsive to their needs, achieve concrete results, operate in a cost-effective manner and ensure equitable representation, transparency and open dialogue.

86. The Agency had been established to promote peace and sustainable development through international co-operation for the safe use of nuclear energy, to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, it was to be hoped, one day to verify their elimination. It could be justly proud of its record, to which the outgoing Director General had made an outstanding contribution during his tenure, steering the Agency through turbulent times with deftness and vision. He wished him health and happiness in the coming years.

87. Many challenging and complex tasks still lay ahead. The potential of nuclear technology for meeting such basic human needs as energy, food, health and water had not yet been fully exploited. Nuclear power would clearly continue to play a key role in the energy mix of many countries for strategic, economic and environmental reasons. Radioisotope applications were also essential in many fields. The Agency should therefore continue, in accordance with its Statute, to encourage the development and refinement of such technology, to assist in framing acceptable responses to related concerns and to make its expertise available as required. The Agency's role as an objective mechanism for information exchange and comparative assessment was unique, as was its role as a vehicle for the transfer of nuclear technology and development assistance. Technical co-operation, a critical

component of the international consensus underpinning the peaceful use of nuclear energy, should therefore be sustained, expanded and adequately financed. However, the technical co-operation programme should also be linked as closely as possible to priorities for economic and social development in recipient countries, with emphasis on quality projects, efficient delivery and TCDC.

88. The use of nuclear energy depended not only on technological advances, but also on public trust that safety was given high priority and that it was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The safety regime had made important strides over the previous decade, but had to be consolidated as a comprehensive and coherent set of widely accepted standards. The transformation of many safety norms into conventions and "hard law" was a welcome development that should continue, with emphasis on widespread adherence. The regime should also focus on helping States with practical implementation, particularly in areas where problems persisted such as radiation protection, reactor safety, waste disposal and transport, physical protection and illicit trafficking.

89. Recent setbacks had shown that the verification of non-proliferation undertakings, which was vital to international security, could not be confined to declared activities. A move towards greater rigour was successfully being made through efforts to strengthen the safeguards system and expand the scope of its application. The new measures would also cover possible undeclared activities, provide the Agency with additional information and access rights, make use of state-of-the-art technology and increase efficiency. Such transparency measures should enable the Agency to provide additional assurances regarding an inspected State's nuclear activities, a critically important requirement as the world moved towards nuclear disarmament. It was therefore vital to secure universal support for the protocol which incorporated those measures.

90. Although the tasks were challenging, they were within the Agency's grasp. The Secretariat could and would do whatever the Member States asked, but certain fundamental requirements had to be fulfilled. Firstly, there had to be a broad consensus on, and sustained commitment to, the three pillars of nuclear verification, nuclear safety and sustainable development, regardless of geographical and ideological differences. The Agency had to

approach the various aspects of its mandate in an objective and balanced manner, reflecting the range of needs and the priorities of its Member States. A process of mutual accommodation was therefore essential.

91. Secondly, there had to be a focused programme and clearly defined priorities: the Agency could not have a monopoly of all things nuclear. The programme had to be reviewed to ensure that it was organized around the Agency's core competencies and what it was best suited to do. Relations between the Agency as flagship with its counterparts, regional organizations, Governments and society at large, should be based on a prudent division of labour, vigorous interaction, co-operation and co-ordination.

92. Thirdly, there had to be adequate resources, both human and financial. The Agency's staff was one of its greatest assets and should continue to be motivated and adequately compensated. Maximum efficiency and prudent management were, of course, essential and he intended to pursue that tradition with vigour and review the Secretariat's organizational structure and management practices. The fact remained, however, that new and additional tasks such as combating illicit trafficking required additional funds. He suggested that when Governments were deciding whether to commit additional resources to the Agency, they should apply the criterion of whether, as shareholders, they were likely to get a good return on their investment, in both the short and the long term. If the Agency was a successful instrument for promoting international peace, enhancing nuclear safety and contributing to economic and social development, then it was surely wise to invest in its future.

93. He shared with those present the exciting task of leading the Agency into the twenty-first century, an Agency that had to continue to be responsive to changing global needs and priorities, that spearheaded the effort to maximize the use of evolving nuclear technology, and that was lean, focused and innovative. He was confident that, with the continuing guidance, active involvement and support of its Member States, the Agency would meet and, he hoped, exceed existing expectations.

94. The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Conference wished to adopt the draft resolution in document GC(41)/25 conferring the title of Director General Emeritus on the retiring Director General.

95. The draft resolution in document GC(41)/25 was adopted by acclamation.

96. The PRESIDENT paid tribute to Mr. Blix on behalf of the General Conference for his outstanding leadership of the Agency for the past 16 years and wished him happiness, good health and continued success in the years ahead.

97. Mr. EL FADHEL KHALIL (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that that Group took particular pride in the approval by the General Conference of the appointment of Mr. ElBaradei of Egypt as Director General of the Agency. In addition to the unanimous support of the African Group, he had enjoyed the full support of the Group of 77 and his appointment had been unanimously endorsed by the Board of Governors. He therefore enjoyed the fullest confidence and could expect unstinting support from the Agency's entire membership.

98. He was taking over at a time when the Agency was in good shape thanks to the successful leadership of Mr. Blix, who had tacked many difficult issues during his mandate with patience, perseverance and wisdom. Historic decisions had been taken regarding the strengthening of safeguards and nuclear safety. The Agency had consequently acquired a special prestige within the United Nations system and he was confident that Mr. ElBaradei, who had served the Agency with competence and dedication for many years, would continue to promote the interests of all Member States and help to add to its achievements in the period leading into the twenty-first century.

99. Mr. ElBaradei came from an African Member State and would be the first Director General from a developing country. He would bring to the task not only superb intellectual, organizational and management skills, but also an intimate understanding of the needs and aspirations of developing as well as developed countries. The African Group would give him its full support, particularly in the field of technical co-operation, which, according to the opening statement by the Director General to the recent meeting of the Board, was facing certain difficulties.

100. Mr. ŠTULLER (Czech Republic), speaking on behalf of the Eastern European Group, commended the Director General on his 16 years of service to the Agency, during

which he had displayed deep personal involvement, high professionalism, keen political intuition, admirable diplomatic skills and a sensitive approach to and deep understanding of the specific conditions and needs of all Member States of the Eastern European Group. Each member of that Group could list specific and unique results of their co-operation with the Agency for which they owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. Blix.

101. His achievements included: international conventions which laid the basis for an international nuclear safety regime in response to the Chernobyl accident; an extrabudgetary programme on objective judgement of the safety of WWER and RBMK reactors and identification of safety issues; technical assistance to Eastern European Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear power and ionizing radiation; and measures to maintain global security through improved effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency safeguards system. Under Mr. Blix's guidance, the Agency had become a highly respected organization promoting the safe and exclusively peaceful use of nuclear power for the benefit of the world as a whole. He wished him every success in his future endeavours.

102. On behalf of the Eastern European Group, he congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as the new Director General. The Group had known him as a responsible and capable head of the Division of External Relations, who had played an important role in respect of a number of decisive legal issues and whose abilities and skills qualified him for the responsible post he was about to assume. The Eastern European Group assured him of its full support and wished him every success. It believed that, under his leadership, the Agency would retain the respect it had achieved and continue to gain strength.

103. Mr. Seung-Kon LEE (Republic of Korea) speaking on behalf of the Far Eastern Group, extended his sincere congratulations to Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General of the Agency. Over the previous four decades, the Agency had played a major role in promoting the peaceful application of nuclear technology and nuclear non-proliferation. However, many challenges lay ahead and, under Mr. ElBaradei's leadership, the Agency should adopt a well-balanced approach to promoting public acceptance of nuclear energy, enhancing the nuclear safety culture and strengthening technical co-operation and the safeguards system. The Far Eastern Group was confident that, with his diplomatic skill,

professional expertise and vision, Mr. ElBaradei would steer the Agency successfully into the next millennium and the Group would provide him with every assistance in the years to come.

104. He also expressed the Group's gratitude to Mr. Blix for his dedicated service to the Agency over the previous 16 years. His outstanding managerial skills had made the Agency an international body of exemplary effectiveness and efficiency. His commitment to the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy had brought the Agency one step closer to fulfilling the objectives and principles enshrined in its Statute, and his efforts in the nuclear non-proliferation field were particularly laudable.

105. Mr. de OURO-PRETO (Brazil), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said that during his 16 years as Director General of the Agency, Mr. Blix had helped to promote international co-operation to ensure that nuclear energy would serve as an instrument of peace and co-operation. Under his leadership, the Agency had been fulfilling the mandate with which it had been entrusted 40 years previously. Mr. Blix had always demonstrated a talent for reconciling positions and interests and was a skilful orator. However, it was his ability to listen which, to a large extent, accounted for his success.

106. Mr. ElBaradei was well known in the Latin American and Caribbean region. He too was politically sensitive, a man of dialogue and understood the need to focus both on safeguards and technical co-operation. The Group was certain that, as Director General, Mr. ElBaradei would explore new channels for dialogue and co-operation, and he could be assured of the Group's support.

107. Mr. TIWARI (India), speaking on behalf of the Middle East and South Asia Group, congratulated Mr. ElBaradei on his appointment as Director General of the Agency. The Group was certain that, with his long experience, he would give new orientation and impetus to the Agency. The developing Member States had always sought to achieve a better balance between the Agency's promotional and regulatory functions and believed that the Agency should act as a catalyst for the promotion of nuclear power as an inevitable, although benign, option for meeting future energy requirements. In that connection, the MESA Group welcomed the appointment of the first ever Director General from the developing world and

assured Mr. ElBaradei of the Group's full co-operation in his endeavours to fulfil the Agency's objectives.

108. The MESA Group also wished to pay tribute to Mr. Blix, who had supervised the preparations for the conclusion of several international instruments on safety and safeguards during his tenure. The Agency owed much to his persistence and efficiency and skills in communication and diplomacy. The Group was certain that, with his rich and varied experience in disarmament-related issues and international relations, Mr. Blix's counsel would be sought in the future and was pleased to note that the Conference had decided to confer on him the title of Director General Emeritus.

109. Mr. RITCH (United States of America), speaking on behalf of the North American Group, said that the Group was keenly aware of the Agency's responsibilities in promoting both world peace and sustainable global development and believed that Mr. Blix had left as his legacy an organization equipped to fulfil those responsibilities.

110. Leadership would be of fundamental importance in the years to come and it was the world's good fortune that Mr. ElBaradei possessed the energetic intellect, personal dedication and diplomatic skills to provide the leadership required in the future. He could be assured of the Group's unwavering support in the accomplishment of his momentous task.

111. Mr. JOSEPH (Australia), speaking on behalf of the South East Asia and Pacific Group, congratulated Mr. ElBaradei, who had an unsurpassed knowledge of the intricacies of the Agency's constantly evolving agenda, on his appointment as Director General and said that the Group particularly welcomed the appointment of a Director General from a Third-World country.

112. Recalling the way in which Mr. Blix had responded to the challenge to the safeguards regime following the discovery of the undeclared nuclear-weapons programme in Iraq, and his firm, yet sensitive handling of the situation with regard to the DPRK, he said that the imprint left by Mr. Blix extended across the entire range of Agency activity. The General Conference's decision to confer on Mr. Blix the title of Director General Emeritus was therefore entirely appropriate.

113. Mr. ORTIZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the Western European Group, welcomed the adoption of the draft resolution on the approval of the appointment of the Director General contained in document GC(41)/5. The support Mr. ElBaradei's candidacy had received bore witness to the esteem in which he was held. His extraordinary personal and professional skills, together with his thorough knowledge of the Agency boded well for his successful tenure. He would receive the Western European Group's full support in achieving the objectives enshrined in the Agency's Statute.

114. Mr. Blix's retirement would mark the end of an era. He had steered the Agency through difficult times and had left, as his legacy, an organization that was an example to others within the United Nations system. The Group was proud that Mr. Blix came from a Western European country and was pleased to note that the draft resolution conferring the title of Director General Emeritus on Mr. Blix had been adopted.

115. Mr. ABAZA (Egypt) said that the fact that Mr. ElBaradei's appointment as Director General had been approved by all the regional groups attested to his recognized capabilities. His delegation was grateful to all those countries that had supported Mr. ElBaradei's nomination and thanked the African Group, in particular, which had submitted his candidature. He also thanked the Group of 77 and other geographical regions for supporting the nomination and finally, he expressed his appreciation to the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Ambassador Walker, for his impartiality in guiding the Board's deliberations on the selection of a new Director General.

116. He also wished to pay tribute to Mr. Blix, who had steered the Agency through a period of profound international transformation. As a result of Mr. Blix's diplomatic skill and political acumen, the Agency had become one of the strongest and most cohesive international organizations and was admired by all.

117. Mr. FRANK (Israel), having pointed out that he was taking the floor because none of the eight regional groups had spoken on Israel's behalf, expressed his Government's appreciation of Mr. Blix's achievements. Under his leadership, the Agency had been able to fulfil its crucial tasks and even improve its performance, despite the formidable challenges it had faced in recent years. He also congratulated Mr. ElBaradei, whose outstanding record

and experience had prepared him well for the high office of Director General. He was confident that Mr. ElBaradei would lead the Agency with wisdom and vision.

118. Mr. BLIX (Director General), having congratulated his successor, Mr. ElBaradei, on his appointment as Director General , thanked the General Conference for the distinction it had conferred on him by making him Director General Emeritus upon his retirement. When he had been elected in 1981, he had been unknown in Agency circles. However, in 1985, 1989 and 1993 Governments must have known what they were doing when they had re-elected him and he was grateful for and proud of the confidence that they had shown in him.

119. From his days as a student, he had felt that it would be a meaningful mission to help in the efforts to put relations between States on the basis of law and had been fortunate enough to pursue that mission at university, in government and at the United Nations. At the Agency, he had had the privilege of continuing to work on the development of international law and had also had the privilege of broadening his own outlook to deal with other elements needed for peace, such as development, disarmament, arms control, education and research, energy and technology transfer.

120. While there was no single hub around which the world turned, the Agency was an important arena where Governments slowly built some of the structures needed for a more peaceful and more developed world community. It had been an enormous privilege to be in the midst of that arena for 16 years. He thanked the Governments of Member States for giving him that privilege and their Missions and experts for the rich and professional relations he had enjoyed with them. He also thanked his colleagues, with whom he had shared the management of the Agency's Secretariat, and the staff of the Agency for their hard work, initiative and loyalty. Finally, he thanked the Government of Austria, which had been such an excellent host to the Agency and to himself personally.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION FUND FOR 1998
(GC(41)/27)

121. The PRESIDENT said that since 1982 the Agency's policy-making organs had observed a practice of recommending Indicative Planning Figures to serve in fixing annual

targets for contributions to the Fund. In September 1995 the Board had agreed that the target for contributions to the Technical Co-operation Fund for 1996 would be $65.4 million and had also agreed on target increases of at least $3.5 million in 1997 and 1998. The approved target for 1997 was $68 million, and in draft resolution B relating to the TCF in Annex I to document GC(41)/10, the Board had recommended a figure of $71.5 million as the target for contributions to the Fund for 1998.

122. The early pledging of contributions to the TCF greatly helped the Secretariat in planning the Agency's technical assistance programmes. Delegations in a position to do so were therefore urged to notify the Secretariat during the Conference of the contributions which their Governments would be making to the TCF in 1998. He hoped that the expected 10% shortfall in new resources announced by the Director General the previous week would not lead to a reduction in the technical co-operation programme for 1998 and he appealed in particular to the major contributors to pledge their share of the target in full.

123. He would report at the end of the session, under a later agenda item, on the contributions which had been pledged up to that time.

GENERAL DEBATE AND STATEMENTS MARKING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AGENCY
(GC(41)/8)

124. The PRESIDENT appealed for understanding and co-operation in the arrangement of the daily speakers' list. Adjustments had been necessary to allow the participation of several Ministers and other senior officials from Member States and international organizations who were unable to spend the whole week in Vienna. Additional adjustments might be required, but he was confident that the Secretariat would do its best to cope with the conflicting demands. He took it that the Conference was in agreement with those arrangements.

125. It was so agreed.

126. The PRESIDENT, pointing out that over 85 delegates had already inscribed their names on the speakers' list, said that he took it that the Conference authorized him,

under Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure, to limit the duration of speeches to 15 minutes, in accordance with past practice.

127. It was so decided.

128. Mr. TAURAN (Holy See) conveyed greetings from Pope John-Paul II, who wished to encourage participants to the forty-first session of the General Conference in their efforts to establish and monitor standards for the transfer and responsible use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Agency's work in the 40 years of its existence had contributed to the emergence of a safety culture that was absolutely essential if the world wanted to continue to use nuclear energy.

129. Moving from military to peaceful uses of atomic energy clearly presupposed the existence of international verification bodies that were capable of securing, in an objective manner, the loyalty of all. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the safeguards system had certainly been an effective barrier to the general proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Agency's instincts and commitments had been an inspiration to new organizations, such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, which had also been set up to prevent the proliferation of other weapons of mass destruction. The Holy See, which was in favour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, expected the nuclear Powers to submit to specific safeguards agreements the entire process of transferring military nuclear material to civilian use, in accordance with the conclusions of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

130. The history of the Agency, and in particular the conviction, competence and hard work of its staff, had shown that it was possible through dialogue and respect for the law to move mankind forward in the direction of fraternity and reason while rejecting the culture of violence and hatred. In that connection, he wished to associate himself with all those who had paid tribute to Mr. Blix, who had guided the Agency prudently and effectively for the past 16 years, and to congratulate his successor, Mr. ElBaradei.

131. All the participants in the General Conference should persevere in their task; at the end of one of the bloodiest centuries in history, all had the duty, as Pope John-Paul II had said, resolutely to proceed to the total outlawing of war and to cultivate peace as the supreme good to which all programmes and strategies should be subordinate.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.